

Message Text

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41

ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOCI, AR, BR, CI

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON JEWISH COMMUNITY IN BRAZIL

1. JEWISH COMMUNITY IN BRAZIL IS ESTIMATED AT 150,000, DISTRIBUTED APPROXIMATELY AS FOLLOWS: SAO PAULO, 60,000; RIO DE JANEIRO, 50,000; PORTO ALEGRE, 10-15,000; SMALLER COMMUNITIES IN CURITIBA, BELO HORIZONTE, SALVADOR, RECIFE, BELEM, MANAUS, AND BRASILIA, WHICH IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE SOME 50-60 FAMILIES.

2. THE BRAZILIAN PEOPLE'S GENERALLY RELAXED ATTITUDE TOWARD RACIAL AND OTHER DIFFERENCES IS REFLECTED IN THE SITUATION OF NEWS IN BRAZILIAN SOCIETY: ANTI-SEMITISM EXISTS HERE, BUT AT FAR LOWER LEVELS THAN IN MOST COUNTRIES, AND IT HAS NO ORGANIZED OR SYSTEMATIC EXPRESSION. THERE HAVE BEEN ANTI-SEMITIC ACTIONS OVER THE YEARS--A CANTOR ASSAULTED, A SYNAGOGUE DEFACED WITH HOSTILE SLOGANS--BUT EACH CASE HAS BEEN JUDGED AN ISOLATED ACTION, AND NONE HAS OCCURRED RECENTLY AS FAR AS WE KNOW. ACCORDING TO THE ISRAELI DCM, ONE "HARDLY FEELS" ANTI-SEMITISM HERE, ALTHOUGH HE IDENTIFIES THE RIO NEWSPAPER TRIBUNA DA IMPRENSA AS CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED TO ISRAEL'S CAUSE.

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3. PERHAPS THE ONLY REMARKABLE ASPECT OF THE JEWISH

COMMUNITY'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS HERE ARE THE RATHER GOOD SOCIAL RELATIONS WHICH EXIST WITH BRAZIL'S SUBSTANTIAL ARAB COMMUNITY, ESTIMATED AT 2 MILLION, OF WHICH ONLY SOME 80,000 ARE MOSLEMS.

4. FYI. AS DEPT AWARE, BRAZIL'S CONCERN OVER PETROLEUM HAS LED IT IN RECENT MONTHS TO SHIFT AWAY FROM ITS PREVIOUS STANCE OF "EQUIDISTANCE" ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND TOWARD A POSITION MORE FAVORABLE TO THE ARAB COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO THE ISRAELI DCM, THIS PERCEIVED SHIFT HAS CREATED SOME CONCERN WITHIN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY HERE, ALTHOUGH THERE IS AS YET NO FIRM FEELING AS TO HOW FAR THE "NEW LINE" WILL GO OR WHAT IT MAY ENTAIL FOR THE COMMUNITY. ONE OF THE SPECIFIC CONCERNS HAS INVOLVED ALLEGATIONS OF "ARAB MONEY" IN THE PUBLISHING WORLD HERE. ONE RUMOR, THAT THE PROMINENT DAILY JORNAL DO BRASIL HAD BEEN BOUGHT BY THE EMIRATE OF ABU DHABI, HAS BEEN KNOCKED DOWN. ANOTHER RUMOR HOLDS THAT THE PICTURE MAGAZINE O CRUZEIRO IS SEEKING TO RESOLVE ITS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES BY MEANS OF AN "ARAB" LOAN, THE PRICE OF WHICH WILL BE THE FIRING OF JEWISH PERSONNEL AND THE ADOPTION OF A PRO-ARAB EDITORIAL STANCE. (IN THIS REGARD, IT MAY BE WORTH NOTING THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO RUMORED THREAT TO THE PRESTIGIOUS DAILY O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO'S STRONG PRO-ISRAEL POSTURE, NOR TO THE OWNERSHIP BY ADOLFO BLOCH, A PROMINENT BRAZILIAN OF THE JEWISH FAITH, OF THE WIDELY POPULAR PICTURE MAGAZINE MANCHETE.) IN ANY CASE, BRAZILIAN LAW PROHIBITS MAJORITY FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF PUBLICATIONS, AND WE JUDGE THAT SUBSTANTIAL BUT MINORITY FOREIGN PARTICIPATION WOULD GO DOWN VERY BADLY HERE. END FYI.

5. BRAZILIANS OF THE JEWISH FAITH ARE PROMINENT IN NATIONAL AFFAIRS IN A VARIETY OF FIELDS. FOLLOWING IS A SOMEWHAT ARBITRARY SELECTION (EMBASSY HOLDS LONGER LIST IF DESIRED) OF TWO OR THREE NAMES IN EACH FIELD: MANUFACTURING: ISRAEL KLABIN, JOSE MINDLIN, MARIO ADLER; CONSTRUCTION: HENRIQUE MINDLIN, JOSE PERES; BANKING: ISRAEL WAINBOIM, JOSEPH SAFRA, AARON BIRMAN; PUBLISHING: ADOLFO BLOCH, ERNST FROMM, ALESSANDRO PORRO; ARTS: PIANIST JACQUES KLEIN, ACTRESS TEREZA RAQUEL AND AIDA GOMES, NOVELIST CLARISSE LISPECTOR; CINEMA: LEON HIRSHMAN, VICTOR BREGMAN; TELEVISION: DAVID GRIMBERG, SILVIO SANTOS, MAURICIO SHERMAN; MEDICINE AND SCIENCE: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DR. ABRAO ACKERMAN, PROFESSOR JACQUES DANON; OTHER: GUILLERME LEVY, DIRECTOR, FEDERATION OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE; LAURICIO SHELMAN, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL HOUSING BANK; JOSE TJURS, DIRECTOR, HORSIA HOTELS; ALEXANDRE KAFKA, DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND; LUIZ GUIMARAES, DIRECTOR, RADIO NACIONAL; ISAAC ACKSELRUD, JOURNALIST; RUBENS MEDINA, CONGRESSMAN; ISAAC NAHON, FOUR-STAR ARMY GENERAL AND DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ARMY PERSONNEL BEFORE RETIREMENT; IDALIO SARDENBURG,

FOUR-STAR ARMY GENERAL AND CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES GENERAL
STAFF AND HEAD OF PETROBRAS BEFORE RETIREMENT; WALDEMAR LEVY
CARDOZO, FOUR-STAR GENERAL AND FORMER HEAD OF PETROBRAS BEFORE
RETIREMENT, AND CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF PETROBRAS.
CRIMMINS

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